



WILSON PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

October 2017
Review date October 2019

Principles

A child should come to school every day it is in session.

A child should only be absent if the reason is unavoidable. Allowing a child to be absent without good reason is against the law and each parent could be fined a substantial sum. Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not the parents) as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason: e.g. illness or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no request for absence has been granted. This includes:

- * keeping children off school for trivial reasons
- * truancy
- * absences which have never been properly explained
- * late arrival at school too late to get a mark.

Providing a note may not be sufficient if the reason given is not "unavoidable". Children should never be kept off school for reasons such as shopping, minding the house for younger children, or as a 'treat'.

If there are attendance problems, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Education Authority. The EWO will try to resolve the difficulties by agreement, but if other ways of trying to improve a child's attendance have failed, the EWO can use court proceedings to prosecute parents, or seek an education supervision order on the child.

Parents may wish to contact the EWO themselves for advice. They are independent of the school, and the telephone number is available at the school office, or from the Local Education Authority.

Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

1. Illness and other legitimate reasons:

If a child is unfit for school and is absent, parents should ring, email or text the reason for the absence. If no reason has been given on the day, an Absence Slip will be sent home when the child returns. This should be completed and returned to the office. Absences will not be authorised without this procedure. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. Absence may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments arranged in school time, provided a written explanation is received. When a telephone or text message has been received, the reason will be recorded on the Register database. When a letter has been received from parents, and the reason for absence has been noted by the teacher and the office, the letter will be kept on file for the remainder of the school year.

2. Holidays:

The school actively discourages parents from taking holidays during term time. Such holidays mean that school work is missed and creates the possibility of children falling behind their peers. **No leave of absence for holidays will be granted.**

Requests for leave of absence (other than holidays) will only be granted in exceptional circumstances on a case by case basis. The school needs at least two weeks' notice of any requests for absence. This will enable the teacher to know in good time if a child will be unable to take part in any educational visit, class assembly, or major production etc.

One day leave of absence will be granted for religious festivals but a Leave of Absence Form must be completed in order for this to be authorised.

3. Punctuality/lateness:

Children must attend on time to be given a mark for a session, unless the lateness is unavoidable. Parents are expected to ensure that children are present at registration. Arriving more than 30 minutes after the start of the session without good reason is counted as unauthorised absence. This will be recorded on the Register database. The Headteacher will write to the parents of children who are persistently late, in order to ensure that they arrive at school on time.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote good attendance. Information will be included in a child's report at the end of every school year.

The school has a duty to make children's time at school interesting and worthwhile. Parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school. The school is committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.